

Time to Get Moving

You're Never Too Old to Be Active

We've all heard that exercise is good for you. Did you know that it's as true for older people as it is for any age group? You're never too old to get moving, get stronger and improve your health.

Fitting exercise and physical activity into your day can enhance your life in so many ways. Regular physical activity can improve your balance and boost or maintain your strength and fitness. It may also improve your mood and help you manage or lessen the impact of conditions like diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis and depression.

Despite these proven benefits, exercise and physical activity rates among older people are surprisingly low. Only about 30% of people ages 45 to 64 say they engage in regular leisure-time physical activity. This falls to 25% of those between the ages of 65 and 74 and 11% of people age 85 and older.

Exercise Recommendations for Older Adults

Experts recommend 4 types of exercise for older adults: endurance, balance, strength and flexibility.

1. Endurance exercise includes brisk walking and dancing and improves the health of your heart, lungs and circulatory system. These exercises can make it easier for you to mow the lawn, climb stairs and do other daily activities.

2. Balance exercises can help prevent falls—a major health risk for older adults.
3. Strength exercises include lifting weights or using resistance bands. They can increase muscle strength to help with activities such as carrying groceries or lifting grandchildren.
4. Stretching, or flexibility exercises can give you more freedom of movement for bending to tie your shoes or looking over your shoulder as you back out of the driveway.

“Even if you haven’t been active previously, it’s important to get started and stay active,” says Dr. Richard J. Hodes, director of NIH’s National Institute on Aging. “We know that people want to live independently for as long as they possibly can. By exercising regularly and including more physical activity in their daily routine, older people can preserve their physical function, which is key to doing the everyday things they want to do.”



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Stay Active as You Get Older!

Experts note that older adults can indeed exercise safely, even those who have physical limitations. To realize the numerous benefits of physical activity it's recommended that adults get 2.5 hours of moderate-intensity physical activity (i.e., brisk walking) a week. That's 30 minutes a day five days a week. It's also OK to break that time into increments. For example, you could take three 10-minute walks a day to meet your daily requirement.

To realize its many benefits, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends you incorporate strength training into your routine two to three times each week. Additionally, you want to have a good program that works your muscles without overdoing it—so shoot for 15 to 30 minute sessions.

Benefits of Exercise

Exercise and physical activity can help you:

- ❖ Maintain and improve your physical strength and fitness.
- ❖ Improve your ability to do everyday things.
- ❖ Improve your balance.
- ❖ Manage and improve diseases like diabetes, heart disease and osteoporosis.
- ❖ Reduce feelings of depression and may improve mood and overall well-being.
- ❖ Improve your ability to shift quickly between tasks, plan an activity and ignore irrelevant information.



IT'S ALL ABOUT BALANCE

Believe it or not, your natural ability to balance your body (when standing or moving) begins to decline after the age of 25! How fast it declines depends upon how much you move your body and practice balancing. By practicing balance training, you can keep this necessary skill in peak shape.

Try this Move

Here's a great simple move to help you improve your balance. The best

part is, you can do this while on break at work, in the office, or even when combing your hair!

- ✓ Standing tall and upright with your feet together, place your hands on your hips.
- ✓ When you are ready, raise the right knee up, towards your waist-line, while maintaining balance on the left standing leg.

✓ Next, place your right foot near the inside of your left knee and hold.

✓ Next, raise up on the ball of the standing left foot and raise both arms out to the side, raising your arms and hands to shoulder level.

✓ Try to maintain balance for up to 30 seconds.

Repeat these steps, three times on each leg.